

Improving Results in Democracy and Governance Programs in South Africa through Enhanced Attention to Gender Issues

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A Women in Development Technical Assistance Project

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by

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This report is predicated on three assumptions:

- That effective democracy and governance (D&G) is not possible without paying attention to gender and women's participation;¹
- That South Africans themselves are already focusing on gender—and therefore that donors cannot be driven by demand and be responsive to South African needs without taking gender into consideration; and
- That organizations working in South Africa are in fact noting issues of women's participation and gender; grappling with them; and, in some cases; addressing them. Organizations are open and ready to be responsive to donor direction and collaboration on this issue.

DISTINGUISHING GENDER ISSUES FROM WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

To begin, it is important to understand why we refer to “gender” rather than simply to “women.” Gender is broader in two senses: First, it is not limited to women's participation in all cases because there are some areas in which men's participation needs to be addressed as well. For example, effective prevention of HIV/AIDS requires that men be as informed and engaged as women. Similarly, family and community concerns should not be the domain of women, but should benefit from the commitment of men as well.

Second, gender gets beyond *who* is in the room or in a process to *how* people relate to one another. In governance and in decision-making (as well as in the more practical issues of training and workshops), the effectiveness of the process is affected by the ways in which people put themselves and their ideas forward, negotiate their positions, and work to achieve their common objectives. A major theme of this review is the *quality* rather than the *quantity* of participation. Whether women are in the legislature, in a local government meeting, in a boardroom, or in a donor-sponsored training, they must be active participants. Not only does this affect the women's experience, insofar as people get more out of a process by participating actively than by sitting there passively, but it is essential for the quality of the process. In some cases, women might be closer to an issue and have more first-hand experience. Women's perspectives are also needed because men need to know what women

¹ President Nelson Mandela said in December 1997 at the Fiftieth National Conference of the African National Congress: “It has been a fundamental feature of our policy for many years that ours could not be a genuine democracy unless the complete emancipation of women was an inherent part of any process of democratization.”

value and how they prioritize, and because different perspectives should be factored into decision-making.²

Therefore, references in this report to “integrating gender” do not mean only women’s participation, gender equality, or equity. Rather, the phrase means integrating an awareness of a variety of gender considerations into policy, planning, and implementation.

WHY GENDER IS IMPORTANT FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Strengthening Democracy Means Both Broadening and Deepening

- Broadening means extending democratic process through diverse participation. Women represent at least 50 percent of the population and should be fully and effectively included.
- Deepening means ensuring that citizens can participate in an *informed* way in both electoral processes and decision-making. As participants in a democracy, women must not only receive information but also have the means to assess it.³
- Strengthening democracy is about empowering people. But too often foreign assistance is provided to people simply as beneficiaries. There are many opportunities to empower women by building confidence and capacity. Moreover, engaging women as participants in planning and implementing development projects often results in more effective programs.

Good Governance Means Effective Governance

- The more capable the people in government, the better for the system. South Africa is working to broaden participation in government while building the skills of people who are new to it. To ensure that South African society can enjoy the benefits of talented people, it must invest in contributions by capable women.
- One aspect of good governance is a government’s relationship to its constituents. Since women are constituents, government leaders and bodies at all levels must listen to them, take their opinions and needs into account, and respond to them.

² For an excellent description of three approaches to gender—gender blind, women specific, and a gender perspective—see “A Need for a Gendered Perspective from the ANC and its Cadres” by Comrade Samora Machel at www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/discussion/gender.html.

³ President Mandela addressed this issue in his December 1997 speech when he pointed out the media’s responsibility to inform the public, the importance of enabling the disadvantaged millions of South Africans “to know what is really happening in and to their country and their future,” and to “enable the masses... to take informed decisions about what they have to do to influence the process of the reconstruction of their own country.”

- Typically, civil society organizations and community-based organizations represent grassroots populations and particular interests. Government's capacity to respond to constituencies depends on how effectively citizens with common interests can present their concerns through representative groups. South Africa has a variety of non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, networks, and associations through which women work together and connect with their governments.

Leadership Is Critical—in Both Government and Civil Society

- Although personal characteristics and commitment may be important factors for leadership, leaders often develop practical skills from structured training and, more importantly, from experience. There are many women in South Africa who hold great potential as leaders. Yet their impact will depend on their having opportunities to engage in activities that will strengthen their skills.
- Good leadership implies an awareness of the people whom a leader serves. It is essential, therefore, that leaders be cognizant of the diversity of their neighbors, constituents, and fellow citizens. But while democracy has everything to do with people and human behavior, the terminology of policy debates can lead to neutral, or in some way “sterile” discussions that often lose sight of objectives, beneficiaries, and resources. Focusing on gender is a technique for asking leaders to remember the key question: Are they taking into account the “people,” the faces, the diversity of population—which includes the recognition of women—in their decision making?⁴

In conclusion, gender and democracy are interlinked, for reasons of both equity and effectiveness. These factors must be considered in planning to achieve an objective of strengthening democratic institutions through the participation of civil society. In many instances, women in civil society are already contributing; in others, they are not but would like to.

⁴ For example, although the Freedom Charter says, “the People shall Govern,” it is sometimes necessary to remind leaders that “people” includes women, rural populations, etc.

CHAPTER TWO

KEY GENDER ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are two critical contextual issues to consider in South Africa: First, gender and women's participation are integral to South Africa's efforts to create a new society;⁵ second, cultural and traditional impediments still limit women's participation. Concerning the first issue, South African society has committed itself to gender equity in its Constitution (see the Constitution, Chapter 1, paragraphs I(b) and 9(3)). Moreover, the Constitution establishes a Commission on Gender Equality "to promote respect for gender equality and protection, development and attainment of equality" (see Chapter 9, paragraphs 181 (1)(d) and 187).

The Commission on Gender Equality

The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) is an independent Commission of 12 commissioners nominated by the public and selected by a special parliamentary committee. Its powers and functions include monitoring and reviewing gender policies of all publicly funded bodies, reviewing existing and new legislation, recommending new legislation, investigating complaints on gender issues, monitoring compliance with international conventions, and disseminating information.

The commission held its first weekly meetings in March 1997, and officially started operating in May. As of December 1997, it had two staff, temporary offices, and borrowed computers. Its activities and accomplishments so far include information and evaluation workshops, a National Gender Report (8/97), partnerships with other organizations (SALGA and SEWU), a ground-breaking gender and media workshop, and legal action against an Islamic radio station that refused to broadcast women's voices. (See General Annexes for further information.)

In addition, South Africa has an Office for the Status of Women (OSW) that formulates and coordinates gender policy within government. The OSW is based in the office of the Vice President. OSW's task is to ensure that gender concerns are integrated into all government offices by establishing gender desks or units at the national, provincial, and local levels; training gender unit staff; establishing mechanisms to address gender issues that arise in government; and encouraging government to integrate gender into policy-making and implementation.

Many of the current legal and constitutional mechanisms that address gender stem from the work of the National Coalition of South African Women, whose members crossed political, racial, and religious lines, and also included the ANC's Women's League. In February 1994, the Women's National Coalition (the NGO formed from the National Coalition) convened a National Convention at which delegates adopted a Women's Charter for Effective Equality.

⁵ At the opening of South Africa's first democratically elected Parliament, President Mandela said, "It is vitally important that all the structures of Government, including the President, should understand fully that freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression" (from CGE flier).

The Women's National Coalition

The Women's National Coalition (WNC) has a new lease on life. It was originally created by temporary mandate to respond to the electoral and constitutional opportunities of 1994. After several years of debate between the WNC and the Women's League of the African National Congress, a permanent charter was signed in June 1997. In addition, the WNC has been reengineered from a centrally controlled to a membership organization.

The WNC will relaunch itself in April 1998. It will emphasize advocacy and information dissemination, with particular focus on economic rights, women in government, and women and the law. To achieve its objectives, the WNC has developed a communications strategy. To address sustainability and ensure women's opportunities in the economic as well as the political realm, the WNC has established an investment company and a women's trust fund. It is hoped that the investment company will generate funding for the coalition and for the trust fund, and that the trust fund will eventually support a broad range of women's projects. (See General Annexes for further information.)

In terms of more broad-based political participation, 52.6 percent of South African women voted in 1994. The percentage of women participants in politics increased from 2.8 percent in 1985 to 33.3 percent in 1994. One-third of all members of Parliament are women, and almost half of all ministers and deputy ministers. South Africa now ranks seventh in the world for women's participation in politics.

There are also important laws that strengthen the enabling environment. The Labor Relations Act, passed two years ago, has entrenched gender rights in the work place. The Basic Conditions of Employment Bill, which has been passed but not yet gone into effect, defines rights that have gender implications, including such benefits as maternity and paternity leave. The draft Employment Equity Bill, which proposes affirmative action targets for private employers and the public service, explicitly focuses on women's advancement rather than lumping women in the broad catch—all of "historically disadvantaged." This bill is the subject of significant debate.

In terms of international commitments, South Africa is a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and is scheduled to make its first report in July 1998.⁶

The second contextual issue in regard to D&G is that despite the rhetoric and formal legal commitment, and despite the extraordinary role that women played in "the Struggle," cultural and traditional impediments still limit women's participation in an open and vibrant democracy. Time and time again, South African women refer to the "culture of silence"—that is, women are not accustomed to speaking up—and this has ramifications for civil society, for public policy debate, for community meetings, for constituency relations with local government, and for training and education.

⁶ For more than the South African context, but also the Southern African context, see the "Declaration by Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community."

One successful African woman in a senior position in government has said, “With all the rhetoric, this is still a strongly patriarchal society.” She and some representatives of the South African Council of Churches agree that those attitudes can be found in Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and African systems. Moreover, tradition is an issue, and not just in rural areas.

OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA TO ADDRESS GENDER ISSUES AND TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION

The opportunities to contribute technical assistance to gender integration and to democracy in South Africa fall into three areas: capacity building; maintaining, strengthening, and expanding the number of women in government; and helping the South African government implement its policy of integrating gender into government operations and policy.

Capacity Building

There are some wonderfully capable, experienced, and inspiring women in South Africa. Women are strong, integral members of South Africa’s current leadership.⁷ At the same time, however, women in government need support as they seek to broaden and deepen their skills. Our discussions with women leaders led to their expressing concerns about working with constituencies, managing procedural rules, building coalitions and alliances, mastering management and administration, learning how to raise funds, and managing their time.⁸

There is also a need for capacity building within government to address some gender-based power dynamics. Of course, those women who have made their way into government have in many ways escaped what South African women refer to as the “culture of silence.” Yet gender roles and habits may still interfere with their ability to contribute fully and effectively to priority setting and decision-making. To overcome this, some women need support in learning to speak up, articulate their arguments, and persuade men—and men must be fully open to accepting their input. Collaboration and governance would be strengthened by capacity building that focus on breaking down the traditional gender barriers and building new channels of communication and cooperation.

Such capacity building is also needed in education and training. If not acknowledged and handled purposefully, gender expectations in these settings tend to diminish women’s contributions. As was suggested above, the presence of women in a room does not ensure their full and honest participation. If women do not speak up, they tend to have a diminished learning experience. In addition, however, the men in the room get a less enriching experience because they do not benefit from the thinking and concerns of the women participants.

⁷ One such woman in leadership said, “Despite all [the cultural and traditional] constraints, I must say that women of South Africa have done quite a lot...especially in comparison with other women on the continent. Women in South Africa are more assertive and innovative.”

⁸ We do not mean to imply that all men are contributing fully and effectively. The point here is to draw attention to the needs of women that are at least partially attributable to their gender.

And the same gender dynamics can weaken or complicate working relations on boards of directors and in committees. For such institutions and processes to be most effective, they require a free exchange of ideas coming from people with diverse talents and perspectives.

It is very important that capacity building extend to women at the local level, where they tend to be most involved. As individuals and as participants in civil society organizations and community-based organizations, women contribute energy and determination. South African women also exhibit an extraordinary level of volunteerism in their communities, working to address such issues as HIV/AIDS, basic education, infant health care, and violence against women. But women would be more effective members of civil society if they had access to training and capacity building, particularly in such areas as promotion, lobbying, leadership, and serving on boards of directors.

Moreover, the “local level” must be rural as well as urban. A focus on capacity building for rural African women is needed for two reasons. First, training does not always reach women in rural areas. Second, and equally important, training and trainers from the cities are not always appropriate or effective for rural women. The cultural, social, and economic circumstances of rural African women in South Africa are vastly different from those of urban women. To be effective, capacity building must be designed by groups that know the rural communities or have credibility there, who know how to work with male “gatekeepers,” and who can build legal or democracy training in response to rural women’s most immediate needs. Capacity building must reach those groups that are not connected to foreign donors and urban resources, but that are already working with rural African women.

Examples of Opportunities for Meaningful Capacity Building

Women are working together to address issues of critical concern. They meet as organizations, networks, and working groups. Sometimes, however, technical or organizational issues undermine their effectiveness.

- One significant women's network postponed its annual board of directors meeting several times because it could not assemble a quorum. In such a case, a small amount of assistance would strengthen the network's capacity.

Advocacy depends on coalitions and information, but information does not flow on its own. Simple methods of disseminating information and reaching out are needed to help women build alliances and share expertise.

- Recently, the Advice Desk and Lawyers for Human Rights hosted an American expert on legal mechanisms to combat violence against women. In one instance, the Network of Violence against Women, which would have been an effective conduit for inviting all interested parties, was not invited.

One impressive women's community-based organization has developed a wide array of materials on subjects such as leadership, lobbying, running a meeting, etc. None of the material contains the name of the organization or contact information.

- A simple workshop about basic promotional activities would enable these women to share their information more broadly. It would enhance their ability to make contacts with groups that might need their assistance or are engaged in similar work. It would also increase their visibility for government and private funding.

Moreover, women need capacity building to be more effective partners in foreign assistance. Program designers and implementers often regard women as only part of the target group, without engaging them in the process. The women often accept that approach because they are not accustomed to being assertive, articulating their positions, pursuing their interests, or being self-reliant.

If women received assistance intended to strengthen them as partners, they would be better equipped to help foreign donors understand the needs of the South African people, design effective assistance, access resources, and achieve results. Projects should include capacity building for women so they are able to express their views, add value, and enrich the assistance process.

Maintaining, Strengthening, and Expanding the Number of Women in Government

Women are well represented in the national Parliament, but they are not sufficiently represented at other levels and in other realms—for example, as local officials or civil servants. And although there are some very skilled and qualified women in upper-level positions, there are still a limited number of qualified women in positions of significant influence.

This issue deserves donors' attention not only for equity reasons but also as an aspect of supporting effective government. Government needs women who are committed to their communities and to issues. In the existing system, however, only a limited number of women are joining government.

A number of factors seem to impede women's participation. In terms of national service, it is often a problem for women to leave their families to be in Pretoria or Capetown. As in many other countries, women's productive and reproductive responsibilities do not leave much time for public life. Yet in South Africa, the juxtaposition is unusually difficult because the challenges of social transformation place extraordinary demands on all public servants.

Traditional culture is another barrier to political participation, although it is greater at the local level than at the national level. There is a cultural conflict between women's traditional behavior—which does not include public leadership, decision-making, or speaking out—and taking positions in local government. In fact, some discussions of public-private partnerships revealed concerns that women may be more active than men in the risky, entrepreneurial stages of community mobilization but turn control over to men once projects have gained legitimacy.

Although some may disagree, we believe that, currently, strengthening women's political participation does not so much need to address discrimination in selection processes, to broaden and strengthen the pool of qualified women. The challenge is to ensure that women in public life feel able and willing to stay there, while others become interested in joining it. Once the problem is defined in those terms, the responses are more likely to be mechanisms

such as accelerated development programs for women, mentoring and guidance on professional development, skills development regarding time management and negotiation, and enriching training opportunities in civil society as a first phase of leadership development.

Translating South Africa's Gender Equity Rhetoric and Laws into Reality

The third opportunity to strengthen South African D&G through attention to gender relates to the sustainability of the South African government's initiatives on gender equality. Many point out that the South African social transformation started with a great deal of energy and commitment generated by the collaboration of women and men in the Struggle and in creating a new Constitution. Although those efforts culminated in legal guarantees, there is real concern about whether the guarantees that have been gained on paper can be sustained in practice.

Implementing South Africa's gender policy requires support in two areas. First, the institutions established to oversee gender integration lack resources. Both the Commission on Gender Equality and the Office for the Status of Women lack the resources to implement their mandates. The government claims it has so many demands to meet—for example, in the areas of housing or education—that it cannot provide the requisite funding. As a result, the Commission on Gender Equality and the Office for the Status of Women have presented their needs to international donors.

Second, although there has been success in raising the awareness of gender, there is now widespread uncertainty about next steps. One African woman has suggested that “efforts to address gender [in] both formal and informal structures still leave much to be desired. They tend to be ad hoc and directionless.” In the past, most discussions focused on women's participation—in meetings, on committees, and in workshops. Now, however, people in government and in NGOs see the next generation of challenges: to ensure that women are effective participants, to recognize power differentials inherent in gender relations, to engage men in the process, and to address the gender implications of public policies and decisions.

Throughout South Africa, therefore, people have expressed the need for technical assistance and training to meet these challenges. The most obvious needs can be found among the staffs of the gender desks and the Office for the Status of Women at the national and provincial levels. These people need help in reaching their target audiences—in ministries and heads of departments, in provincial offices and local governments, and among elected officials and civil servants.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

One way to address gender issues in D&G is to work with the many South African governmental and non-governmental entities that would gladly collaborate. These include government offices, working groups, women's groups, and community-based organizations that are striving to strengthen women's participation and address gender. Some of them are:

- The Commission on Gender Equality;
- The Office for the Status of Women;
- The Women's Empowerment Unit/Legislative Speakers' Forum;
- The Gender Working Group of the South African Local Government Association;
- The Gender Unit of the Department of Justice;
- The Women's National Coalition; and
- The Network of Women against Violence.⁹

These entities offer a wide range of opportunities for collaboration. In the case of the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), it will be sponsoring hearings and conferences that will overlap with the work of democracy organizations. For example, with regard to economic empowerment, the CGE is focusing on the needs of women farm workers and domestic workers, barriers to advancement of women in the public sector and structural barriers faced by women in the private sector, and supporting a pilot project on gender and macroeconomic policy.

With regard to political empowerment, the CGE will work closely with the Independent Election Commission to ensure that voter education and arrangements for the 1999 elections are conducive to women running for office, engage directly with political parties regarding their gender policies, train women candidates, and facilitate exchanges with other Southern Africa countries to work toward achieving a Southern African Development Community (SADC) target of a minimum of 30 percent women in politics and decision-making positions by 2005.

The Women's Empowerment Unit of the Legislative Speakers' Forum is another group offering opportunities for collaboration. The Speakers' Forum is made up of all speakers and deputies at the national and provincial levels, and its Women's Empowerment Unit focuses on the development of women Parliamentarians. With Swedish funding (SIDA), the European Union is supporting the Women's Empowerment Unit in three phases: setting up an office and doing a needs assessment, developing a training program for women Parliamentarians, and integrating gender training into the induction process for all new members of Parliament. Since there is concern about the human resource development of new members of Parliament and awareness that women Parliamentarians will need basic skills, the Women's Empowerment Unit has said that it is "on the look-out for organizations or donors that might provide training."

There are also gender initiatives relating to work with the Department of Justice and support for local government. The Department of Justice has a department for transformation and equity, within which there is a Directorate of Gender and Children. The Department of Justice entities are concerned with training regarding gender issues, quality legislation, and legal reform. They are also looking at curriculum reform for law schools. In June 1997, the Department of Justice's Gender Unit published "Gender Policy Considerations," a draft discussion paper for public consultation. Since this paper addresses everything from human

⁹ There are also opportunities for collaboration with GETNET, the Gender Advocacy Group, the South African National Shelter Movement, and the Women's Development Foundation.

resource development and management to access to justice, courts, training, and the legal profession, it would behoove donors to ask about the Department of Justice's gender concerns before completing any agreement or program design with the Department of Justice.¹⁰

As for the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), it is the key to local government management and is also the voice of local government. Since gender is embedded within SALGA's constitution and SALGA has a Gender Working Group, any collaboration with that organization should take gender into account. Right now, SALGA's Gender Working Group has several important concerns. First, the government's recent Green Paper did not incorporate recommendations put forth by the Gender Advocacy Project on behalf of the Commission on Gender Equality and SALGA's Gender Working Group. Second, there is a real concern about demonstrating the positive impact of women in local government so that the ANC's 50 percent quota will not be questioned. Third, there are many training needs. SALGA's Gender Working Group wants to be sure that council members understand gender impacts and that each provincial local government association has a gender director. For now, the National Institute for Public Interest Law and Research will train 30 facilitators for each province in early 1998 and will focus on informing South Africans about the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. There will be many more such opportunities—and existing programs could offer a great deal.

Last but certainly not least, there are many opportunities to support groups that are working in rural areas and addressing gender issues. Many of these groups are small. Many started working on issues other than democracy or human rights, but are finding that their work is evolving in that direction. Often they began their work by responding to immediate needs, such as adult education and literacy, water, or basic confidence-building. As they say, they have “coal face experience” from having gradually built relationships with both women and men in a village.¹¹ Only after building trust can they talk about sensitive issues such as divorce, abuse, violence, and customary marriages. And only after that can they interest women in human rights, legal rights, and democracy.

¹⁰ One concern relating to women, gender, and the courts was expressed several times: that there is a need for counselors in the courts to ensure that women who have been victims of violence are not victimized again—through ignorance or bureaucratic insensitivity.

¹¹ Building relationships with men in rural areas is critical. A representative of KwaZulu Natal Survivors of Violence noted that one cannot access women without dealing with men, and that some women are afraid of their men. Therefore, it is important not to alienate men and to give them status—and then one can get to the women. This is a gender issue as well as one of women's participation.

CHAPTER THREE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS TO INTEGRATE GENDER INTO THEIR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE PROJECTS

There are two ways to address issues of gender and women's participation in South Africa: (1) within existing project implementation; and (2) by providing assistance to South African governmental and non-governmental initiatives on gender.

The most immediate opportunities are within existing programs. This means ensuring that projects reach women and involve them actively. It also requires that grantees or partners be aware of ways in which the content of their training or technical assistance could be strengthened or enriched by acknowledging and incorporating gender considerations. The WIDTECH team has found that, although most NGOs are aware of the importance of integrating gender into their programs, few know how to do so effectively. In fact, most know only to ensure that women attend training workshops.

Yet nearly all organizations expressed their willingness to integrate gender if they had support to do so. A number of organizations have already developed good insights about how to integrate gender but lack the information-sharing mechanisms that would enable them to exchange ideas and experiences. There are also opportunities for NGOs to assist government initiatives. Donors could play a vital role in this process by incorporating gender into reporting requirements and supporting workshops during which information about gender-related issues can be shared.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAMS AND GENDER

The following recommendations focus on existing projects to recommend ways to enhance effectiveness in strengthening democratic institutions by taking account of women's participation and gender. It is also very important that programs target men as well as women for training related to gender impacts.

Assistance to the South African Government

Although the South African government has many people of great talent and experience, there are areas in which capacity building is needed. In terms of gender, training is needed in two areas. First, to be able to succeed and advance in government, some women need further training on how to work the levers of power. Second, both men and women in government need training to understand the gender implications of policies, administrative procedures, and political decisions.

There are many opportunities to provide D&G support and, at the same time, direct resources or capacity building toward gender issues. For example, training is being sought by SALGA's Gender Working Group, the Women's Empowerment Unit, and the Office for the Status of Women.

Recommendation: Connect the supply of skills development and training offered by such programs as ACCORD, IDASA, IMSSA, NIPILAR, PACT/Sedibeng Center, and Vuleka Trust with the demand from SALGA, the Women's Empowerment Unit, and the Office for the Status of Women.¹²

Focusing on the Grassroots to Broaden and Deepen Democratic Participation

Donors and their partners express their commitment to reaching civil society at the grassroots level, particularly in terms of access to justice, rule of law, and conflict prevention. In some cases, partners are already reaching beyond urban areas and to African women, but donors are not capturing information about those activities.

In other contexts, there are opportunities to extend technical assistance to women if partner organizations look for them and pursue them. But reaching local groups, community-based organizations, and rural women in villages requires determination and monitoring. It is not enough to invite one or two women representatives for one workshop. It is often not effective to provide training that was developed in a city to trainees in villages.¹³ Truly reaching the grassroots does not mean extending what exists, but developing new approaches and working with new partners.

One reason why organizations are either not reporting their impacts on women or not maximizing them is that, although indicators count numbers of people trained or with knowledge of human rights, they do not reflect the types of people involved. If D&G projects are to broaden and deepen democratic participation, it is important to ascertain current levels of involvement among particular demographic groups, including urban/rural, men/women, elderly/youth—and then show that projects lead to increased participation.

Recommendation: Establish more effective reporting requirements, and change indicators to encourage partners to report on participation by African women in rural areas (and to capture how they are doing it already).

¹² A donor should be able to measure progress with gender integration as it measures progress on other objectives. To facilitate but not direct this process, we offer *potential* baselines and targets—expecting them to offer guidance and first steps toward setting indicators. For example, we offer the following possibilities for this recommendation: Baseline: the number of programs that a select group of partner organizations currently offer to women's groups in government or for gender awareness in government. Target: 25 percent of programs should have some gender focus.

¹³ One group is reaching women near factories through interactive drama that depicts a Friday-night scene when a husband comes home drunk. The action stops intermittently for discussion. The group has taken the play to churches on Sundays and to the police.

Addressing Gender Implications within Democracy and Governance Training

Improving D&G through gender integration must, however, go beyond women's participation and capacity building. It is necessary to raise awareness, in men as well as women, of gender impacts and issues in all policies and all environments. There are two ways to approach this: through careful review of curricula and policy discussions, and by raising awareness among men of how gender considerations may complicate or impede the achievement of mainstream policy goals.

Men could be reached through separate, special training—and in fact a number of initiatives in South Africa already focus on training for men—or they may be reached along with women by incorporating gender issues into curricula. For example, there are opportunities to enrich the training of such organizations as ACCORD, the Center for Socio-legal Studies, the Community Law Center, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), Independent Mediation Services of South Africa (IMSSA), and National Institute for Public Interest Law and Research (NIPILAR).

Recommendation: Have organizations that offer training (for example, in human rights, conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, and advocacy) revise their curricula to incorporate gender issues.¹⁴

Extending Conflict Prevention Skills to Women

In the short term, conflict prevention programs have aimed at helping local groups resolve conflicts that threaten stability and democracy in South Africa. In that context, it is perhaps not surprising that much of the conflict resolution training has focused on men and boys, since they are ones engaged in existing conflicts.

Donor staff agree, however, that their long-term objective is to build conflict resolution skills among all South Africans. Integrating gender into this general objective raises two issues about effectively strengthening South Africa's ability to prevent and resolve conflicts:

- Programs should engage those individuals—including women—who have the disposition for such skills and an interest in the role; and
- Programs should build skills among various social groups—including women—that may find themselves involved in future conflicts.

One realm in which stress and conflict currently exist, and frequently lead to violence, is in the home, in the form of domestic violence.

¹⁴ **Baseline:** Which, if any, have consciously integrated gender? **Target:** all curricula reviewed by the end of 1998.

Violence against women is one of the most serious threats to individuals, families, democracy, and government in South Africa. Girls and women are often the victims of violence, and the results of rape, gang rape, domestic violence, and child abuse have tragic and irreparable impacts. Thus, donors might encourage the use of their conflict resolution resources for initiatives that address violence. These might include programs in the courts, training of paralegals and mediators, CEDAW training, and capacity building of NGOs and networks seeking to stop the violence and help the victims.

Recommendation: Develop a list of organizations that are working on issues of violence against women, and give that list to partners working on conflict resolution with the suggestion that they invite the violence against women organizations to some of their training or workshops.¹⁵

MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS

Some management mechanisms offer opportunities to enhance gender integration in D&G projects. Other mechanisms are not intended to affect women in any way, but run the risk of impacting negatively on collaboration with small women's NGOs or on women's participation.

Ideally, gender integration should start at the very earliest phases of project development. The selection of partners by the donor and the definition of the work it wants done will often determine whether gender is addressed.

One mechanism that offers opportunities to pay attention to gender is the use of umbrella contracts, through which a donor may delegate authority to organizations such as CREA or MACRO. Because these organizations do not design projects, and rarely relate to the clients, they may see their role as administrative and managerial and therefore divorced from gender concerns. In fact, CREA has indicated it may be "leery" of "getting out in front" of its donor on gender issues. It is very important, therefore, that donors require these organizations to take the initiative on gender and report instances where process or procedures exclude women or decrease benefits to them. Since CREA may be responsible for about 60 grants over five years, this is a key opportunity to integrate gender into its programs—and a real missed opportunity if it does not.

A second management mechanism is the use of consortia, such as NIPILAR. Since consortia often collaborate with some smaller organizations or with organizations that are not based in Johannesburg/Pretoria, they offer real opportunities to reach the grassroots—and therefore women. Donors often encourage or require the involvement of consortia or partnerships in projects. In addition, nearly every policy paper or White Paper in South Africa is now talking

¹⁵ **Baseline:** How many training programs or workshops have focused on violence against women? (Some certainly have, such as NIPILAR's gender unit, Umtapo, and Advice Desks.) **Target:** two training programs per year relating to violence against women for each partner. **Indicator:** Count the number of training programs provided to women's NGOs, women in government, or gender desks.

about partnerships. Consortia may also be effective mechanisms for collecting and sharing experience at the grassroots level, which is often a valuable source of best practices and techniques.

The last management mechanism is monitoring and reporting. Those processes are not ends in themselves but are ways to encourage and capture positive results. Thus data should be not disaggregated for gender as an end in itself but because it is a means of tracking project success. Some project successes can be attributed to existing efforts to reach women. Yet partner organizations could do more. To achieve this potential, it would be helpful to include gender in discussions of project monitoring plans. If partners have identified gender issues and baseline concerns in response to RFPs, then setting targets would be the logical next step.

It is also possible to improve gender integration through indicators for existing programs. There are a number of indicators that could be improved by considering gender impacts. These changes may not be easy, but they should help focus project implementation on customers and on achieving democracy objectives.

In terms of reaching new women (and men) outside of major metropolitan areas, using established NGOs as liaisons is understandable in terms of financial accountability but it may impede grassroots capacity building in three ways. First, urban-based intermediaries often do not know the real needs and culture of local women, and may design activities without engaging women in the rural areas in defining their most critical needs and interests. Programs on legal and human rights need to “start where women are.” Second, if intermediaries are not compelled to report the extent to which they reach new people (including new women), they may not make the extra effort to reach new geographic areas or communities. Third, very few financial resources flow to local groups that have already developed expertise, have credibility, and are stymied by financial constraints—and they often can provide training and assistance at a fraction of the cost incurred by large, urban NGOs. A number of women’s groups report that established organizations tend to ask them for information or invite them to conferences, but then take what they need to report to donors and leave little know-how or resources.

Recommendations:

- In the RFP process, donors might ask that applicants to: (1) identify gender issues relating to the work they propose to do; (2) suggest how those issues should be addressed; (3) identify the organizations, including women’s groups, with which they intend to cooperate; and (4) explain how those prospective partners would enhance the applicant’s ability to reach new women or address gender concerns. Including this attention to gender would communicate the donor’s commitment to gender issues and encourage prospective partners to integrate gender into their activity design.
- For scopes of work, donors might incorporate proposed mechanisms for addressing gender by explicitly setting forth expectations. It would be helpful if donors were to

ensure that scopes of work identify steps, data, or approaches that a grantee is expected to use to address gender issues.

- To help partners develop their understanding of gender concerns and build relationships with South African organizations that have experience working with rural women or on gender issues, donors might ask consortia to report on best practices, innovative techniques relating to women's participation, methodologies for breaking the gender barrier in workshops, and community-based programs that engage men and women together in sharing decision-making and work.
- To engage local groups with “coal face experience” more effectively, donors might require that lead groups in consortia—for example, NIPILAR—or partners responsible for grants management—for example, CREA—report on their strategies for reaching and engaging those groups. It would also be helpful to see whether the local groups receive financial compensation for their work. One alternative would be to put together a Rural Women's Advisory Committee, engaging six to eight representatives from around the country who might contribute their expertise to help partner organizations incorporate gender issues in the design and implementation of rural activities.

IMPLEMENTATION BY GRANTEES

Incorporating Gender Concerns into Project Design

Projects could be designed more effectively, in terms of women's participation and consideration of gender impacts and relations, if grantees were asked to identify obstacles to women's participation or active involvement. This would be a way of assessing current circumstances and defining baselines. If grantees have not been involving women or addressing their needs, they should explain why. In their proposal, they should describe the current level of participation and need. Only after they have defined the current situation can they set reasonable, achievable targets of what they want to accomplish.

Recommendation: Where appropriate and feasible, require that proposals address gender and that work plans spell out the ways in which the project will reach and engage women.¹⁶

Encouraging or Requiring Gender Workplans by Grantees

Having met with 15 D&G grantees, our team has observed an overall trend toward openness and willingness to enhance gender in their projects. People were prepared to show that they include women. If a donor asks, they seem eager. But, in many cases that seems as far as they can go alone. They need some guidance.

¹⁶ **Baseline:** How many have explicitly addressed gender already? **Target:** all new work plans in 1998 should address gender.

Partner organizations respond well to explanations of why gender is important, rather than thinking it is just a requirement. But they need help to recognize gender-based differences and to learn ways in which their work could be improved. When they see that their own self-interest lies in improving their projects, they become very interested in integrating gender.

Recommendation: Donors might organize workshops on gender for their partners. The workshops should focus on teaching their partners to ask the right questions about women's participation and gender integration, to share best practices, and to identify needs that are not being addressed.¹⁷ This does *not* require foreign assistance because there are experts in South Africa to provide this.¹⁸

Increasing the Numbers of Women Participating in Democracy and Governance Programs

A major first step would be for grantees to pay more attention to who is in the room. Many admit that all too often in a training session, most of the participants are men. Partners agree that when training is offered to local officials, civil servants, drafters of legislation, or representatives on student representative councils, the participants are likely to be predominantly male.

In cases where participants are mostly men, the sponsors need to determine: (1) how that happened, and (2) how they can remedy it. Factors to consider include the following:

- How, where, and in what format is information disseminated?
- Do posters show only men's faces?
- Are the announcements in newspapers that women do not read?

Women in Training Workshops

Hypothetical: Consider an analogous situation involving race: that 80-90 percent of the trainees at a workshop are white. What would happen? Might the training be canceled and the sponsoring organization be severely chastised? In light of South Africa's commitment to women in all sectors and at every level, there is reason for partner organizations to be cautious about capacity building that may so disproportionately reach men.

¹⁷ It was suggested at a discussion of this report that participation might be broader and at a higher level if there were a workshop to address a range of issues, including gender integration and best practices. Given our concern about reaching men and decision-makers, we agree with this suggestion, as long as the workshop allows sufficient time to address gender issues and the subject is not marginalized.

¹⁸ **Baseline:** To determine the baseline, a donor might send a brief survey to ask whether the grantee: (1) has a gender unit, (2) has a particular project focusing on women, and (3) has mechanisms in place to enhance women's participation in project activities. **Target:** each grantee could be asked to develop and submit a written policy that acknowledges the importance of gender and a plan that sets forth specific measures to enhance gender integration in the project.

- Are there “gatekeepers” who can select, nominate, or send participants?
- What is the content of invitations? Is it clear to women that they are intended as participants and that they would benefit from attending?
- Logistics: Where and when is training offered? Can women get there safely and conveniently?
- Does the target group have to be defined as is, or can another group be invited to attend as well? For example, can training for members of student representative councils, who are nearly all men, also include young women on campus? Can the training for people who draft legislation be complemented by training for civil society organizations about how to critique or comment on proposed legislation?

Recommendation: When grantees report attendance, require them to explain any time that women (or men) comprise less than 40 percent of participants.¹⁹ If they report it one time, next time require an explanation of what they have done to improve the numbers.

Training program implementers also need to develop proactive ways of ensuring women’s participation, such as:

- Contacting women’s groups, NGOs, or government offices to tell them about the opportunity and ask them to refer women;
- Requiring that gatekeepers—for example, heads of departments or tribal leaders—send 50 percent women; and
- Finding gatherings or groups of women to whom to offer training.

Once some women begin to participate, it is important to try to reach *new* women, to increase the pool. Inviting the same women over and over again may deepen their skills, but it does not *extend development assistance or rights awareness to a broader pool* of women—which is a key consideration.

Recommendation: Require reporting on how many

Reaching Women’s Groups

Example: When the Independent Election Commission (IEC) was doing voter education before the elections of 1994, it held sessions on Saturday afternoons and found that not many women attended. Women were too busy with chores and responsibilities at that time. But the IEC found a simple and effective way to reach women in rural areas: the women’s groups of many churches, of nearly all denominations, meet on Thursday afternoons. The IEC did not have to worry about reimbursing transport costs, serving tea, or sending out notices. It simply had to call the local pastor or pastor’s wife, and arrange to be featured on a particular Thursday.

¹⁹ We suggest 40 percent because the numbers rarely work out to be exactly 50-50, in either direction, but regularly falling below 40 percent indicates there is a problem.

new people attend a conference or workshop. (Although we start with concern for women, the principle applies to all participants.)²⁰ Request some text explaining how the partner reached women in new communities or geographic areas.

Improving the Quality of Participation by Women Participants, and Enriching the Exchange of Information and Perspectives among Women and Men

If there is a commitment to capacity building for women, then women should be not only trainees but also trainers. This is important because people learn and develop from training and teaching, and that experience should extend to women. In addition, women trainers are role models for women participants, showing them that they, too, can be experts. And women may contribute a different working method or perspective than men trainers. In many cases, if there are two trainers, it is good to have one of each.

Recommendation: To encourage a focus on capacity building for women (or for men in areas where they are typically under-represented, such as in health care), grantees' reporting should include the gender of trainers.

In addition, the quality of women's participation depends on that participation being active rather than passive. There should be enough women in the room, and enough support from the trainer or facilitator, for them to speak up and contribute. Not only will women have a more valuable experience, but their comments, perspectives, and experience also will enrich the debate for everyone in the room.

Some organizations have addressed this issue. The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) trains its trainers and facilitators to handle the power dynamics in a room, including those that are gender based. The Vuleka Trust also deals with this issue in its course on "Basic Human Relations."

Recommendation: Have three or four organizations (such as NIPILAR or IDASA) meet to compare their techniques and have their training units put out a brief working paper discussing the various approaches.²¹

Techniques for Suspending Gender Power Dynamics

One technique gaining recognition in KwaZulu Natal is the "fish bowl" technique, introduced by Ira Horowitz at the University of Natal. Women sit in a circle with men in a circle around them. While the women are talking, the men only listen. This gives women the time, space, and comfort to contribute, while enabling the men to benefit from their input. Another technique is setting a "code of conduct" for the duration of a workshop. This attempts to replace traditional deference and gender roles with expectations developed by the participants. It often includes such ideals as giving everyone a chance to speak and accepting differences of opinions.

²⁰ **Baseline:** In some cases, the percentage will be very low. In others, where an organization actually goes to a rural area to do training, it will be very high. **Target:** Attention should focus on grantees that have not done well, and they should be expected to reach 40-50 percent newcomers.

²¹ **Baseline:** How many organizations do any of this? The baseline would be those that do pay attention to it. **Target:** All organizations that have not taken action to improve women's participation should consult with those that have done so and should develop a facilitators' training program.

Recognizing the Role of Partners in Developing the Capacity of Women Staff

Because of such factors as stereotyped gender roles and traditional gender relations, women need opportunities to develop within South African society—in private businesses, government, and NGOs. In fact, NGOs are an ideal setting for people to learn and prepare for other jobs—and NGOs such as IMSSA, IDASA, and NIPILAR are known for having been the training ground for people now in significant positions in government.

If donors look at the hiring and staffing patterns in their partner organizations, the results are not always favorable for women. Beyond the total numbers, there are many instances where women are in second-tier positions.

Recommendation: Suggest that each partner do a simple self-assessment by counting the number of women and noting where they are within the organization. This will set a baseline from which the targets can be set. (Note: IDASA tracks women in the organization and their positions, and publishes the information in its annual report. IMSSA does so in its semi-annual audit.)

Organizations such as IMSSA and IDASA are aware of the need to “train women up.” IMSSA actually asks donors to fund “skills development,” and gives employees grants of up to 7,000 rand for certificate or diploma programs. IDASA, however, has its funding designated for either operations or activities, but there are no funds for employee development.

Recommendation: When negotiating work plans and budgets, donors should make it clear to grantees that they are willing to allocate funds to cover mentoring or skills development for women. In such cases, donors should require reporting about the number of women who utilize those funds and about how they rise in the organization to higher positions.²²

Another way to help women advance, and prepare them for higher-level jobs in their current organization or in government, is through mentoring. Mentors can help women develop in their professions and rise to levels of leadership in their organizations.

Recommendation: Donors might add a question in their reporting formats regarding efforts to mentor women and help them rise in the organization.²³ Ideally, there would be some proactive encouragement of mentoring as well.

Integrating Gender into Content: Curricula, Training, and Workbooks

Many new training materials are very good in terms of using gender-neutral language and avoiding gender stereotypes. Yet neutral is not enough when gender issues need to be

²² **Baseline:** amount of funding spent on extra training for women.

²³ **Baseline:** How many grantees have any mentoring or follow-up program now? **Target:** possibly 50 percent of the grantees should have it.

purposefully discussed. The WIDTECH team discussed such materials with the International Republican Institute, ACCORD, and IMSSA. Each organization was receptive to the idea of reviewing its materials—and *acknowledged that the training would be improved as a result*.

Gender in such programs is an integral part of the discussion and training, because gender affects the way people relate to one another. Instances of this can be found in conflict resolution and negotiation, on committees and in partnerships for local economic development, and in the way local officials relate to their constituents. Teaching skills and modalities without addressing gender is a missed opportunity to prepare people for real-life political and social challenges. For example, what better way is there to illustrate differences in assumptions, expectations, and relational skills in a conflict prevention program than to have men and women engage in practice negotiations with each other? Moreover, to use gender as a vehicle for effective training, written materials are not enough. Trainers and facilitators should be prepared to talk about gender impacts as well.

Recommendations: Set goals for reviewing and revising curricula. Goals are always changing, however, so the target could be to review two curricula per year.

Linking Resources: Partnering, Networking, and Promoting Services

South Africa has made a sincere, broad-based commitment to gender equality and has some fine experts on gender integration. Yet much of their expertise remains isolated and unavailable for broader usage. Many organizations are not visible, and their gender initiatives certainly are not. For example, in KwaZulu Natal both Umtapo and the Community Law Center are doing good work regarding gender and women in development. But for such efforts to be widely effective, there is a need for networking.

There are also opportunities to build linkages between “mainstream” projects and women’s organizations. NIPILAR’s materials relating to CEDAW, and the CSLS Democracy for All materials, would be invaluable to groups that do not yet know about them. From the other direction, there are women’s groups with experience and materials that are not yet known to general democracy partners. For example, NISAA has publications such as its *Guide for Battered Women* (which includes information about how to use the legal system) that should be distributed for wider use. Other organizations, such as the Campus Law Center/Durban, FAMSA, WILDD, and Umtapo, also have important insights and resources.

A great deal of networking seems to take place from the centers (for example, in Gauteng, Durban, and Capetown) outward, or among the centers. People who work in the provinces have expressed a need for better linkages within the provinces and among the local groups. Groups in relative proximity need to know about one another’s activities to cooperate, complement one another’s work, and share best practices.

Beyond networking, there is a need for organizations to make their expertise known and to market it to those who would appreciate it. When donors’ grantees have gender-related skills and services that are needed by government, they need to be proactive and aggressive. They

need to *find* the opportunities to provide services (for example, to provincial and local governments, the police, heads of departments, and gender desks). But right now, these organizations are not motivated to reach out. Once they learn to identify their niche and market their services, they will have developed an approach that is important for their financial sustainability.

Recommendations:

- It is not enough for partners to report the number of copies of a publication they produce. It is important to know *how, where, and to whom* they are distributing it. For example, the South African Institute for Race Relations publishes a quarterly report that solicits comments from readers. Yet it will get comments from readers who are aware of gender issues only if the report is sent to women's groups or gender-aware readers. To encourage real debate and the exchange of varying points of view, donors might require that reporting go beyond the numbers of copies of a publication to questions of who gets it and who reads it.
- Donors might encourage partners to offer their services to government offices and bureaus at all levels by providing training in marketing and promotion for greater impacts and financial sustainability. To measure these connections, partners should report the number of contacts made with government offices and the number of seminars or workshops provided to government offices. To further encourage these connections, give information to bilateral partners (and to the Commission on Gender Equality and the Office for the Status of Women) about resources available from NGO partners.
- Donors might encourage organizations like NIPILAR or CREA to engage an appropriate local organization in each province to develop a provincial directory of gender initiatives. Alternatively, a donor might work with the Office for the Status of Women to help provincial Offices for the Status of Women contract with a local organization to gather the information. Or a grant to the CGE could be designated to fund local information gathering. Note: This information gathering should *not* be a governmental task, but should be given to a community-based organization or NGO with experience in the geographic area.

Integrating Gender into Public Policy Analyses

Integrating consideration of gender issues into democracy programming means recognizing and debating the gender implications of policies. Yet when institutes and NGOs have the opportunity to give advice or opinions about policy, they often do not take account of gender.

Since not everyone is able to, or wants to, address gender in their policy analyses, the question is how to institutionalize it. One option is to establish a temporary gender editor or monitor to review documents and teach analysts and writers ways to look at issues for gender impacts. Yet this person risks being regarded as the "gender police" and may be dismissed or marginalized if she or he does not have full institutional support.

Another possibility is to link think tanks and public policy institutes with women's groups that can act as advisors on gender issues. If, for example, the South Africa Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) established linkages with organizations or individuals who have a gender perspective on an issue, such as new laws on bail, they might point out any failure to address gender impacts.

To foster such a system, however, SAIRR would have to make a concerted effort to reach out to some women's groups.

Even those public policy analyses that note potential gender impacts often lack data. All too often, it is not possible to say with certainty what the gender disparities or impacts may be.

Recommendations: Require that a certain percentage of articles or policy papers addresses gender, and leave it to each organization to decide how to do it. Compile a set of model articles that effectively set forth the policy debate on an issue and include a gender perspective. To support South Africans in ensuring gender equality, encourage (or require) partners to anticipate gender questions by collecting variegated and disaggregated data whenever possible.

The Lack of Gender-based Data

Although public policy should take account of gender differences, needs, and impacts, such data are not collected on a regular basis. For example, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has data that show the provinces and industries from which disputes arise, as well as the nature of the disputes. The latter category tracks sex discrimination and sexual harassment claims (of which there are surprisingly few). But data are not being collected regarding such issues as how frequently women are complainants (for example, in employment cases), how often they prevail, and what kinds of remedies are recommended.

CHAPTER FOUR CONCLUSION

In terms of equity, gender integration may be an end in itself. But in terms of democracy-building in South Africa, focusing on gender considerations is a means of strengthening democratic institutions through the participation of civil society. Our gender analysis has focused on three areas: (1) women's participation at the grassroots level and in governance; (2) strengthening democratic processes by ensuring effective, productive collaboration among men and women; and (3) assessing the gender impacts of government policies. Our findings revealed that some organizations are already paying attention to women's participation, but that women's participation could be enhanced by exchange of best practices. We also detected some gender barriers and identified some opportunities to strengthen D&G activities through attention to gender. Once aware of these barriers and opportunities, donors and their partners should be in a better position to address them.

Both as institutions and as organizations staffed by people committed to strengthening democratic participation in South Africa, donors aim to provide technical assistance that is welcome by South African society and effective in reaching mutually agreed goals. Paying attention to gender in D&G work in South Africa reinforces and complements South African goals of social transformation. At the same time, integrating gender concerns into activity design, implementation, and evaluation is an effective mechanism for strengthening D&G results.

ANNEX A

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